

Coveting Mind by Grey Field

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Summary: Mike is a charming guy. It is understandable that a girl might get a crush on him. Eleven is an insecure girl. It is understandable that she might be a danger to any girl interested in Mike. Understandable is the wrong word. Terrifying is much more accurate. (Mileven)

1. Sunday Night

Alternative title: J-El-ous

AN: I am dyslexic. To those who don't know this means I have a hard time spelling things, so if you see a spelling mistake in this, or any other chapter tell me. I will correct it and make the whole thing more enjoyable for everyone. Spell check can only go so far, so please chip in.

Disclaimer: I do not own Stranger Things or anything that appears in this story. Even anything original in this I forfeit all rights to.

Coveting Mind

Sunday Night

It was a few years since Will was lost in the Upside-down. Life in Hawkins had been mostly normal. Occasionally interesting. Monsters from beyond the veil, horrors man was not meant to know, and oddities that just defy any kind of categorization. Everybody concerned agreed that those things were not good. Kind of awesome, but not good. Sometimes though, it was worth it. Sometimes the weird happenings did not just take from them. Sometimes they gave back.

El had returned. This time to stay. Officially. All the shadowy government agencies had finally backed off. She was even legally adopted by the Byers.

Eleven Byers. El liked her new second name. It meant she had a family. It meant there was a place she belonged. A place she was always safe. It was a good name. Not a perfect name. She knew of one name she liked better. One name she wanted to call her own, but that could come later. This one would do. For now.

El had grown since she first escaped from the lab only a few years before. Slightly short for her age, her black hair came down just

above her shoulders. Her figure could still be described as boyish, but Joyce, El's new mom, assured her that she was filling out nicely. El was unclear on what that meant. Her mom acted like it was a good thing, so El thought it was a good thing.

This was the last night before her first day of proper school. El's new family had worked hard to get her registered and ready for it. Tomorrow she was going to be going to school with her new brother Will. There would be her friends Lucas, Dustin, and Mike.

Yes, Mike would be there. They even were going to have some classes together. The thought made her smile.

El's friends were all at Mike's house right now, playing another one of their tabletop roleplaying games. Normally she would be with them. When it became apparent that El was there for good, the boys decided to invite her to join them in their geekiest hobby. El loved playing with them. Not just because Mike was their game master, so she got to sit next to Mike for hours. Listening to him talk. Staring at him. Yes, she really did love that part, but she thought even without Mike there she would love playing as Elgore, the half-ork barbarian.

Tonight, El was not able to go join them. She had to prepare for school. Earlier her mom sat down with El and went over everything again just to make sure she was ready. They unpacked El's new backpack, checked that she had everything she needed, and repacked it. They went over El's schedule with a map of the school so she would not get lost. Her mom even reminded El that if she needed help that she could always ask a teacher or one of the boys who also in that class. Her mom also reminded her that El should not leave the classroom in the middle of a class. Not even if she wanted to see Mike.

El's friends had known that she was not available and told her it was fine. They would put the current campaign on hold, and would play something else that week. There was a different game they wanted to play, and they thought El would not enjoy that one anyway.

Joyce wanted El to go to sleep early. She told El that it was natural to be nervous, but El should try to relax. El might have been nervous, but she had a way to deal with that.

Eleven lay on her bed clutching a twenty sided die to her chest. Her eyes were closed. Her breathing steady. In her mind she saw a boy. A bit lanky, but hints of muscle suggested that wiry would be a better description. He was sitting down at a table. Smiling he said, "The pink door opens, you hear friend computor say, 'Unauthorized access detected.'"

The boy, Mike, turned his head to the right, clearly listening to someone El did not see. "Correct," he responded to some question that El did not hear. He paused again to listen before saying, "Right, and as the table settles on its side five men each with four arms come running through the pink door." Another pause. Mike raised an eyebrow and asked, "Do you know how to drive it?"

In a basement across town four teenage boys sat around a table. Lucas leaned away from his game master. "Of course not. Such knowledge would be above my security clearance. What I meant to say is I jump behind the metal contraption and shoot at the closest attacking mutant."

Mike nodded and rolled several dice, "He goes down. Will, it is your turn."

Will looked at a note card, careful not to let anyone else see what was written on it, before responding. "I run through the orange door, and hit the purple button."

Mike rolled some more dice before saying, "You manage to make it through the door without getting shot, press the button, and," Mike checked his notes, "The door shuts behind you."

Dustin turned towards Will and over dramatically yelled, "Judas!"

Will smiled and shrugged.

"He left us to die," Dustin said turning to Lucas. "We need vengeance."

Lucas finished writing something on a scrap of paper and passed it to Mike. "Don't worry," he said, "Vengeance will be ours."

Reading the note Mike looked impressed. He nodded with respect at

Lucas and said, "Clever."

"What's clever?" Will asked, "What did he do?"

Lucas rested an elbow on the table, leaned forward, and smirked.

"What did you do?" Will asked.

Dustin laughed.

In another house across town, another girl hung up a phone. She stood before a mirror. She was more conventionally attractive than Eleven. Blonde hair, with a fuller figure. This was Jennifer Hayes.

Facing the mirror, she looked herself in the eyes. "This is the week," she resolved, "This week, I will tell him." She was going to tell Mike Wheeler about her feelings for him. She could do it. She had a plan. She had the confidence. Nothing was going to get in her way.

Jennifer had no idea what she was up against. Dustin, Lucas, and Will had no idea how much trouble there friend's love life was going to cause them. El had no idea how much hate she could have for someone not out to kill her friends. This week they were all about to learn.

Mike just had no idea. He could be kind of oblivious like that sometimes.

AN: So the stage is set. Please leave a review to help me stay interested in this story. I don't know how often I'll be able to update, but we'll see. Hopefully this will be fun. I'm happy the show had a throw away girl about the boys age so I don't have to resort to a OC in the first chapter.

For those who are not tabletop RPG connoisseurs like myself, the game the boys were playing is called Paranoia (1st edition published in 1984), which should only be played with seasoned roleplayers. It's a game all about stabbing your fellow players in the back, so if the people playing don't have an easy time separating character from self it can lead to hurt feelings.

2. Hello Person

AN: The worst thing about having only one chapter up is that you cannot tell how many people actually finished reading and how many people hit the back button.

Disclaimer: I don't own Stranger Things. If I did I doubt it would have turned out half as good as it did. I mean come on, that show was fantastic and I would have made a mess of it.

Coveting Mind

Hello Person

Mike, Lucas, and Dustin had to be at school at 8:00. They arrived at 7:00. For the past week the PA system had been making a low level buzz sound in the background whenever it was used. Normal students would have ignored this. Every other student ignored it. These three were far too into this kind of stuff, and thought they knew what the problem was. They offered to fix it, and the faculty accepted their help.

This proves two things. First, The faculty of Hawkins High School were far too trusting. The three boys had no plans to sabotage the system, but just on general principles high school students should never be trusted with the PA system. Second, the boys are total nerds. Complete and total nerds.

"So," Lucas said while fiddling with some dials. "When are you going to ask out El?"

Mike sighed, "We've been over this."

"Um. No," Lucas looked at Mike, "We haven't."

"We've talked about it," Dustan chimed in from under the table, "I don't think Lucas was there."

"Oh," Mike stopped to think about it. "I guess you're right."

"So?" Lucas said.

"Right, so I like El. A lot." Mike said, "She's great, but she doesn't really get it."

Lucas waited for a moment and asked, "Doesn't get what?"

Mike shrugged and waved his hand in a vague all encompassing gesture, "Most stuff. She's been cut off from society most of her life. I don't think she really understands the implications of what it is to date someone or what it even means. More than that there's her whole situation. Before I ask her something like that I want her to feel she's able to say no."

Lucas laughed, "Not many guys want a girl to say no."

"I don't mean that I want her to say no. It's just," Mike paused looking for the right words. "If I asked her out now I'm afraid that she'd think she needs to go out with me. Like if she didn't then part of her new life would be taken from her. I don't think she understands that she doesn't have to be scared of that. That if she turned me down that doesn't mean I'd abandon her, or any of us would stop being her friends. She'd still have a home here." Mike paused again to collect himself, "If we ever start dating I want it to be because El wants it. Not because she doesn't understand, and not because she feels she has to."

From under the table Dustan said, "It's good to go."

Mike flipped a switch. Leaning into the microphone he looked at Lucas and asked, "You grok?" The question could be heard clearly throughout the school, free of any buzz.

"I don't think I grok it," Lucas said shaking his head, "But I think I understand it."

"Speaking of El," Dustin said pulling himself out from under the table, "We should move if we want to give her a proper greeting."

It was a brand new day. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and Jennifer had questions that needed to be answered. "Who's the

new girl?" and more importantly "How does Mike know her?"

Jennifer was talking to some of her friends when the new girl was dropped off in front of the school along with Will Byers. She seemingly was trying to hide behind the short boy, which was ironically the only reason Jennifer, and several other people took note of her. She glared at everyone. As Will walk towards the school the new girl closely followed. As the two passed by groups of students she moved around Will, always keeping him between her and the closest group of people.

Out of the school came Mike and two of his other friends. Jennifer was not sure what their names were. The new girl changed. Her face lit up. She broke away from Will to run towards the group of nerds.

Jennifer became uneasy as the new girl stood next to Mike. She wanted to ask Mike who this girl was. To just walk up and just ask a question like that. It seemed so embarrassing. Jennifer shook herself out of it. Embarrassing? She was no blushing wallflower. She was Jennifer "Queen of Calm" Hayes. Such fears had no power over her. She was going to walk up to them and ask Mike to introduce her to this new girl.

Jennifer excused herself from the conversation and set off with confidence. If not confidence than at least bravado.

El was uncomfortable. There were so many people she did not know. People that she could not trust. They were all looking at her. Was the whole day going to be like this? Full of new people looking at her. Will was there, but Will was only Will. This was a mistake. School was a mistake. Eleven did not know how she thought she could do this. She wanted to shove everyone away from her. She wanted to turn around and run.

Then Mike was there.

Everything was fine. "Hi," Mike greeted her.

"Hi," El greeted him.

Dustin and Lucas both said hi as well. El blinked before curtsying to her friends. Silently she scolded herself for not noticing them. Just because Mike was there did not mean she could ignore everyone else. No matter how hard that was.

It was nice. The boys fussed over her, making sure she was fine. They all gave her note cards with their schedules in case she needed them.

"Hello Mike," A girl said. The girl just walked up to them without warning. El was unsure how to react. The girl was just there standing by Mike. Standing too close to Mike.

Mike was surprised as well. It took him a moment to respond, "Hi Jennifer."

"And who is this?" The girl said as she pushed on Mike's elbow.

"Right, Jennifer, this is El. She's new in town. El, this is Jennifer, my lab partner in chemistry."

El barely registered the name. This girl, Jennifer, had not moved her hand away from Mike's elbow. Three of her fingers rested on it. It was distracting. Wrong.

El held out her hand. Jennifer moved her hand away from Mike to grasp El's in a handshake. El glanced up into the bright, smiling, entirely too pretty face. Looking down, El may have squeezed the girl's hand tighter than was polite.

"It's nice to meet you El," Jennifer said. El responded with a nod.

Mike smiled. He saw an opportunity. "Your first class is history, with Mrs. Smith, right?" Mike said.

Jennifer nodded.

"That's El's first class too," Mike said. He hoped that this could be the start of a new friendship for El. Mike just had to give them a small push. "Would you mind helping her out? This is her first day in a public school."

Silently, unnoticed by the two girls and Mike, the three other boys

exchanged looks. This was not anything to worry about. Right?

AN: So El meets her victim- I mean romantic rival. Thank you for all the reviews and such. Knowing people were looking forward to the chapter made it come out a lot quicker than I expected. I'm not entirely happy with it, but I'm not sure how I could improve it, so I might do some editing later. I don't think you should expect other chapters out this fast, but I would have said the same of this one so maybe I'm wrong. If you have any thoughts, criticisms, questions, or just encouragement review and tell me.

As this story progresses writing El will become one of the greatest challenges I have ever set myself. I need her to be obsessive over a boy, but still feel like a fully fleshed out character with agency of her own. Creepy, but still cute. Terrifying, but relatable. I'm going to fail, I arguably have already failed beyond recovery, but I will fail with style.

Grok is a word from "Stranger in a Strange Land." Grok loosely translates to understand, but it's more than that. You know how you can understand something on an intellectual level, but you don't really get it. That's not grokking. Then there's things that you fully understand, it's not just that you see and know how it works, but that you feel how it works to the point of empathy. You just get it. That's grokking.

3. The First Class

Disclaimer: Still do not own Stranger Things. That is why this is posted on Fanfiction. Who am I kidding, if I ever owned a successful series there's like a 60% chance I'd write a fanfic of it. That is not the case here.

*IMPORTANT EDIT: I slightly changed the last chapter. The school tour just was not working. Sorry. I tried, but it was not doing what I wanted it to, and felt awkward so I changed it. Instead El and Jennifer get to have their first class together. You might want to look back at the last few paragraphs of chapter 2, but it is not really necessary.

Coveting Mind

The First Class

Making sure that she got a seat next to El in class was simple enough for Jennifer. She had to apologize to her friend Amy for ditching her, but Amy understood the situation. The teacher divided them up into groups of three to answer a worksheet of questions.

Jennifer was surprised by how El went about the assignment. El would look over a question, reading slowly, and ask Will, the third member of their group, what some of the words meant. Once she seemed to have a good idea of the question El would hunt down the information with vicious efficiency. She glared at the textbook like it had offended her on a deep and personal level. Turning the pages with such force and speed that Jennifer winced, fearing that they would rip. The girl seemed to have two settings. Quiet and curious, or hungry predator. There was no middle ground with El.

When the three finished with the assignment Jennifer felt the need to talk. Mike did ask her to help El feel welcome. "So you're friends with Mike?"

El nodded, "Mike is the best."

Jennifer smiled. "Yes, he really is," she agreed. "How do you know him?"

Eleven paused. Seeming to choose her words carefully she replied, "He's friends with Will."

There was obviously something more to the situation that El was not willing to talk about. Jennifer was raised to be polite so would not pry. Her curiosity might try to burn a hole through her brain, but she would be polite. Do not pry. She moved the conversation along.

There was something about Jennifer Eleven did not like. She was not good. Except Mike liked Jennifer. Mike only liked good things. Everything Mike liked was good, so Jennifer must be good. It was confusing. El could not help but be wary of her.

It was something about how Jennifer was so focussed on Mike. Too focussed on Mike. It was wrong. This girl should not find Mike that interesting. Mike was very interesting. El knew that Mike was the most interesting person. El loved to spend hours doing nothing but watch Mike do trivial things throughout the day, and had done so often. It is just that this girl should not share El's opinion of Mike, because something. Well, El was certain that it was because of some reason. A very good reason.

El felt guilty that she felt like that. Mike gave El the brightest smile when he introduced Jennifer to her. It was the same smile he had when he was teaching El how to play Dungeons and Dragons, or showing her Star Wars. It was something Mike enjoyed and wanted to share with El. Not liking Jennifer made El feel like she was letting Mike down somehow.

El vowed she would make herself like Jennifer. They were going to hang out together, and talk about things friends talk about, and El was unsure. Braid each others hair maybe? El was fairly certain she heard that was something friends who are girls (which she knew was distinctly different from girlfriends) were suppose to do together. The two of them were going to be good friends. Then Mike would be happy, and would be proud of her.

El forced herself to smile.

Lucas and Dustin had english together as their first class. Dustin had trouble focusing on the assigned reading. His thoughts kept drifting to the conversation that happened before school.

Leaning towards his friend, Dustin whispered, "Did you get the impression that Jennifer has a thing for Mike?"

Lucas raised an eyebrow at Dustin, and shook his head, "It's Jennifer Hayes, one of the most popular girls in school, and Mike is, well, Mike." Lucas had nothing but loyalty for his friend. He would be willing to follow Mike through hell if it came to it. Lucas was also a realist, and when it came down to it Lucas knew, "He's the nerdiest nerd who ever did nerd." Jennifer was pretty. A cheerleader. One of the in crowd. The idea that someone like Jennifer Hayes would be attracted to Mike was absurd. Lucas just had to keep reminding himself of that fact, no matter how many times he remembered her looking at Mike like a love sick puppy. It was impossible. Any evidence to the contrary must be dismissed.

"That is a good point." Dustin said.

"It is," Lucas replied.

"But," Dustin said, "That does not answer my question."

"I don't know," Lucas said. He was not good at this kind of relationship thing. Not that there was a relationship here. As stated previously, it was impossible.

"I'm just worried were looking at a potential code K-220-Yellow on our hands."

Lucas gave Dustin a funny look, "What about giant squid?"

"No, K," Dustin said, "You're thinking of Kr."

Lucas thought for a moment before asking, "You know Jennifer's friend, Allie, right?"

"Her name is Amy," Dustin replied. "Kind of."

"Well ask her then." Lucas said. "She'd know."

AN: This took longer than I expected. Sorry. Real life decided it was going to pile everything on me, a few of my other projects have started to take off (taking much of my creative energy), and, as stated before the chapter, the initial idea for this chapter was just not working. Honestly, I'm still not really happy with it, but it will do. I might come back and change some bits later. Again, sorry, and thank you for all the reviews and love this story is getting.

Now that I'm getting into the story a lot of the idea's I had planned don't seem to be working out. I'm trying to figure out how best to proceed, and what needs to happen before hitting act three which I hope will work out better. Is there anything you want to see in this fic? I'm not promising anything, but some random requirement might help me, even if it's just something simple like using the word "perspicacious." Is there any part you like / not like?

The first (and only planned) proper OC of the story is, not introduced, but named at least. Amy. I chose her name by typing "baby names 70s" in google and picking the 2nd most popular girl name. I only bring this up because the most popular girl name was Jennifer. It seems one of the shows writers was as lazy as I am.